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**HAITI**

## SNAPSHOT

# Stabilizing Hillsides Mitigates Flood Risk

**Environmental preservation projects improve living conditions.**



*A worker reinforces a flood wall in the hills above Port-au-Prince.*

*“We are in awe of seeing how green the Morne l’Hôpital looks. The occurrences of landslides have diminished by 90 percent.”*

*—Ronald Charles  
Port-au-Prince resident*

### Telling Our Story

U.S. Agency for International Development  
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<http://stories.usaid.gov>

**November 2011** – Rising high above Port-au-Prince, the hills of the Morne l’Hôpital have long threatened the city.

Denuded by years of mining and deforestation, the steep terrain offers little to restrain the rainwater dropped by seasonal tropical storms and occasional hurricanes. The torrents saturate the high lands, strain and overwhelm deficient flood-control infrastructure, and imperil the people living below.

To address this ever-present danger, USAID is working with the Ministry of Environment’s Office of Surveillance and Improvement of Morne l’Hôpital to empower at-risk residents to confront the threat. USAID is improving the stability of ravines by supporting efforts to build more than 20,000 cubic meters of dry walls along 10 km of the eroded hills.

USAID also is planting over 130,000 trees and deep-rooting grasses to prevent soil erosion and promote water absorption during the wet season.

According to Ronald Charles, a Port-au-Prince resident, the work has already produced significant results. “The areas of Portail Leogane [in downtown Port-au-Prince] have seen an improvement of 70 to 80 percent compared to before, in terms of flooding,” he said.

Ludner Remarais, Director of the West Department of the Ministry of the Environment, echoed the assessment in a letter to USAID. “We can confirm that the ravines treated on the Morne l’Hôpital have controlled erosion and reduced flooding in targeted areas,” he wrote, “which allowed the populations traditionally affected to benefit from substantial improvement of their living conditions.”

Through this work, USAID is stabilizing the hillsides of the Morne l’Hôpital, advancing sustainable environmental programs in and around Port-au-Prince, and empowering the people of Haiti to protect their communities for the long term.

The Ministry of Environment has expressed a strong interest in replicating these types of activities in other vulnerable regions of country.

Contact: USAID/OTI Haiti Team  
e-mail: [DCHA.OTIHaitiDCProgramManagers@usaid.gov](mailto:DCHA.OTIHaitiDCProgramManagers@usaid.gov); Web: [www.usaid.gov](http://www.usaid.gov)